Stephen G. Recordon (SBN 91401) 1 Sgrecordon@aol.com Recordon & Recordon 2 225 Broadway, Suite 1900 3 San Diego, CA 92101 4 Telephone: (619) 232-1717 5 Clinton Rooney (SBN 221628) 6 rooneycdi@gmail.com Rooney & Lickel 7 1102 Cesar E Chavez Parkway 8 San Diego, CA 92113 Telephone: (619) 573-9547 9 10 Robert L. Hyde, Esq. (SBN: 227183) bob@westcoastlitigation.com 11 Joshua B. Swigart, Esq. (SBN: 225557) 12 josh@westcoastlitigation.com San Diego, California Hyde & Swigart 13 411 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 301 14 San Diego, CA 92108-3551 Telephone: (619) 233-7770 15 16 17 18 19 Edward Gates, on behalf of himself and all others similarly 20 situated; 21 Plaintiffs, 22 ٧. 23 Asset Acceptance, LLC; 24

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CLERK US DISTRICT COURT

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United States District Court Southern District of California

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Case	Nur	nbe	r:			

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CLASS ACTION

Complaint For Damages

- 1) Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692 et seq. ("FDCPA")
- 2) California's Rosenthal Act, California Civil Code §§ 1788-1788.32 ("Rosenthal Act")

Jury Trial Demanded



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HYDE & SWIGART

Defendant.

Introduction

- 1. Edward Gates, (Plaintiff), through Plaintiff's attorneys, brings this action to challenge the actions of Asset Acceptance, LLC, ("Defendant"), with regard to attempts by Defendant to unlawfully and abusively collect a debt allegedly owed by Plaintiff, and this conduct caused Plaintiff damages.
- 2. Plaintiff makes these allegations on information and belief, with the exception of those allegations that pertain to a plaintiff, or to a plaintiff's counsel, which Plaintiff alleges on personal knowledge.
- 3. While many violations are described below with specificity, this Complaint alleges violations of the statutes cited in their entirety.
- 4. Any violations by Defendant were knowing, willful, and intentional, and Defendant did not maintain procedures reasonably adapted to avoid any such violation.
- 5. At all times herein mentioned, Defendants were the agents, servants, and/or employees of their co-Defendants and in doing the things alleged in this Complaint were acting within the course and scope of said agency, authority, and employment.
- 6. For the purpose of this Complaint, the phrase "charged off" means moving an alleged delinquent account from a creditor's accounts receivable accounting ledger to its bad debt accounting ledger so as to allow said creditor to incur a a loss against income or accounts receivable for tax or other purposes.
- 7. For the purpose of this Complaint, the phrase "charge off date" means the date GE Money Bank, or any other creditor that subsequently assigned, placed, or otherwise transferred to Defendant Asset for collection, "charged off" a debt.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

8. Jurisdiction of this Court arises pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331, 15 U.S.C. § 1692(k), and 28 U.S.C. § 1367 for supplemental state claims.

- 9. This action arises out of Defendant's violations of the Fair Debt Collection
 Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692 et seq. ("FDCPA") and the Rosenthal Fair
 Debt Collection Practices Act, California Civil Code §§ 1788-1788.32
 ("Rosenthal Act").

 10. Because Defendant does business within the State of California, personal
 - 10. Because Defendant does business within the State of California, personal jurisdiction is established.
 - 11. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

PARTIES

- 12. Plaintiff is a natural person who resides in the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, State of California.
- 13. Defendant ("Asset") is a limited liability company, organized under the laws of Delaware.
- 14. Plaintiff is obligated or allegedly obligated to pay a debt, and is a "consumer" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).
- 15. Defendant is a person who uses an instrumentality of interstate commerce or the mails in a business the principal purpose of which is the collection of debts, or who regularly collects or attempts to collect, directly or indirectly, debts owed or due or asserted to be owed or due another and is therefore a debt collector as that phrase is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).
- 16. Plaintiff is a natural person from whom a debt collector sought to collect a consumer debt which was due and owing or alleged to be due and owing from Plaintiff, and is a "debtor" as that term is defined by California Civil Code § 1788.2(h).
- 17. Defendant, in the ordinary course of business, regularly, on behalf of himself, herself, or others, engages in debt collection as that term is defined by California Civil Code § 1788.2(b), is therefore a debt collector as that term is defined by California Civil Code § 1788.2(c).

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This case involves money, property or their equivalent, due or owing or 18. alleged to be due or owing from a natural person by reason of a consumer credit transaction. As such, this action arises out of a consumer debt and "consumer credit" as those terms are defined by Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.2(f).

FACTS COMMON TO ALL CLAIMS

- Sometime before August 31, 2009, Plaintiff is alleged to have incurred certain 19. financial obligations with GE Money Bank.
- 20. These financial obligations were primarily for personal, family or household purposes and are therefore a "debt" as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. §1692a(5).
- These alleged obligations were money, property, or their equivalent, which is 21. due or owing, or alleged to be due or owing, from a natural person to another person and are therefore a "debt" as that term is defined by California Civil Code §1788.2(d), and a "consumer debt" as that term is defined by California Civil Code §1788.2(f).
- On or about August 20, 2006, Plaintiff allegedly fell behind in the payments 22. allegedly owed on the alleged debt. For the purposes of this Complaint this date is referred to as the "default date."
- As of this default date, GE Money Bank claimed that the alleged debt owed 19 23. by Defendant was \$2,885.00. 20
 - Subsequently, but before August 31, 2009, GE Money Bank charged off the 24. alleged debt, which GE Money Bank claimed at that time was \$3,291.00, thereby charging contractual interest in the amount of \$406.00.
 - Subsequently, but before August 31, 2009, the alleged debt was allegedly 25. assigned, placed, or otherwise transferred, to Defendant Asset for collection.
 - On August 31, 2009, Defendant Asset filed a Complaint in the Superior Court 26. of California for the County of San Diego against Plaintiff Gates claiming a

- debt based on theories of Open Book Account, Account Stated, Goods, Wares and Merchandise and Money Lent.
- 27. The case number of the above August 31, 2009 Complaint was 37-2009-00069393-CL-CL-EC. A true and correct copy of this August 31, 2009 Complaint is attached as Exhibit A.
- 28. Defendant Asset falsely claimed at paragraphs 10 and CC-4 of the above August 31, 2009 Complaint that Asset was entitled to prejudgment interest from August 20, 2006 on the principal amount of \$3,291.45 when, in fact, this was not the principal amount. Consequently, Defendant Asset was collecting an amount when such amount that was not expressly authorized by the agreement creating the debt or permitted by law.
- 29. By alleging in the Complaint that it was entitled to prejudgment interest, Defendant Asset violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692f and f(1).
- 30. Through this conduct, Defendant used a false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of a debt. Consequently, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e and 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10), as well as Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17.
- 31. Defendant Asset claimed this right as an assignee of GE Money Bank when, in fact Asset was not an assignee of the alleged debt.
- 32. Through this conduct, Defendant used a false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of a debt. Consequently, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. § 1692e and 15 U.S.C. § 1692e(10), as well as Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17.
- 24 33. Plaintiff Gates then requested that Defendant Asset provide a copy of the account alleged in the above August 31, 2009 Complaint.
 - 34. Defendant Asset subsequently produced a series of credit card statements ("Statements") bearing the names of GE Money Bank and Plaintiff Gates.

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- These Statements revealed that on August 20, 2006, the outstanding balance 35. on Plaintiff Gates' account was not \$3,291.45, but rather was \$2,885.03.
- These Statements revealed that GE Money Bank claimed a balance of 36. \$3,291.45 not on August 20, 2006, but rather on March 5, 2007.
- These statements revealed that GE Money Bank imposed on Plaintiff Gates 37. contractual interest charges of \$455.71 and late fees of \$245.00 during the period from August 20, 2006 and March 5, 2007.
- By claiming a right in the August 31, 2009 Complaint to pre-judgment 38. interest on the amount of \$3,291.45 from August 20, 2006 to the present, Defendant Asset falsely claimed a right to pre-judgment interest on an amount already including contractual interest charges for the same period.
- By claiming a right to both recover amounts charged as contractual interest 39. and to recover prejudgment interest during the same period of August 20, 2006 to March 5, 2007, Defendant Asset misrepresented the amount of a debt, and attempted to collect an amount not expressly authorized by the agreement creating the debt or permitted by law.
- Through this conduct, Defendant was collecting an amount (including any 40. interest, fee, charge, or expense incidental to the principal obligation) when such amount was not expressly authorized by the agreement creating the debt or permitted by law. Consequently, Defendant violated 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692f and 1692f(1), as well as Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.17.
- Because of this illegal activity by Defendant Asset, Defendant Asset has 41. received tens of thousands of dollars from California consumers that it was otherwise not entitled to

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

Plaintiffs define "Class One" as (i) all persons that are "consumers" as that 42. term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3); (ii) that were sued by Defendant Asset; (iii) in any California Superior Court; (iv) within one year prior to the

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- filing of this action; (v) for alleged financial obligations allegedly owed at one time to GE Money Bank, or any other creditor that subsequently that subsequently assigned, placed, or otherwise transferred to Defendant Asset for collection; (vi) where said obligations were primarily for personal, family or household purposes; and (vii) where Defendant Asset sought in its action against said consumer interest not owed.
- Plaintiffs define "Class Two" as (i) all persons that are "consumers" as that 43. term is defined by California Civil Code § 1788.2(b); (ii) that were sued by Defendant Asset; (iii) in any California Superior Court; (iv) within one year prior to the filing of this action; (v) for alleged financial obligations allegedly owed at one time to GE Money Bank, or any other creditor that subsequently that subsequently assigned, placed, or otherwise transferred to Defendant Asset for collection; (vi) where said obligations were primarily for personal, family or household purposes; and (vii) where Defendant Asset sought in its action against said consumer interest not owed.
- For purposes of the First Claim for Relief, the FDCPA Claim, the class period 44. is one year prior to the filing of the Original Complaint.
- For purposes of the Second Claim for Relief, the Rosenthal Act Claim, the 45. class period is one year prior to the filing of the Original Complaint.
- The representative Plaintiff faithfully represents, and is a member of, Class 20 46. One and Class Two. 21
- Class One is composed of thousands of persons, the joinder of which would 22 47. 23 be impractical.
 - Class Two is composed of thousands of persons, the joinder of which would 48. be impractical.
- The individual identities of the individual members are ascertainable through 26 49. Defendant's records or by public notice. 27

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- There is a well-defined community of interest in the questions of law and fact 50. involved affecting the members of Class One.
- 51. There is a well-defined community of interest in the questions of law and fact involved affecting the members of Class Two.
- The questions of law and fact common to Class One and Class Two 52. predominate over questions affecting only individual class members, and include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (a) Whether Defendant violated the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692 et seq.;
 - (b) Whether Defendants violated California's Rosenthal Act, Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1788 et seq.;
 - (c) Whether Class One is entitled to the remedies available to Plaintiff under the FDCPA;
 - (d) Whether Class Two is entitled to the remedies available to Plaintiff in California's Rosenthal Act;
 - (e) Whether Class One is entitled to declaratory relief;
 - (f) Whether Class One is entitled to injunctive relief;
 - (g) Whether Class Two is entitled to declaratory relief;
 - (h) Whether Class Two is entitled to injunctive relief;
 - (i) Whether Class One is entitled to an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit pursuant to the FDCPA;
 - (j) Whether Class Two is entitled to an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit pursuant to California's Rosenthal Act;
 - (k) Whether Class One is entitled to any other remedies; and
 - (1) Whether Class Two is entitled to any other remedies.
- Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of both classes. 53.
- Plaintiff has retained counsel experienced in handling class claims and claims 54. involving unlawful collection practices.

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- 55. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of both classes, which all arise from the same operative facts involving unlawful collection practices.
- 56. A class action is a superior method for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. Class-wide damages are essential to induce Defendant to comply with Federal and State Law. The interest of class members in individually controlling the prosecution of separate claims against Defendant is small because the maximum statutory damages in an individual FDCPA action are \$1,000.00 and an additional \$1,000.00 under California's Rosenthal Act. Management of these claims are likely to present significantly fewer difficulties than those presented in many class claims, e.g. securities fraud.
- 57. Defendant has acted on grounds generally applicable to the class, thereby making appropriate final declaratory relief with respect to the class as a whole.
- 58. Plaintiff requests certification of a hybrid class combining the elements of Rule 23(b)(3) for monetary damages and Rule 23(b)(2) for equitable relief.

CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT I

FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT (FDCPA) 15 U.S.C. §§ 1692 ET SEQ.

- 59. Plaintiff repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference, all other paragraphs.
- 60. The foregoing acts and omissions constitute numerous and multiple violations of the FDCPA, including but not limited to each and every one of the above-cited provisions of the FDCPA, 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et seq.
- 61. As a result of each and every violation of the FDCPA, Plaintiff is entitled to any actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1); statutory damages in an amount up to \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(2)(A); and,

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reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3) from Defendant.

COUNT II

ROSENTHAL FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT (ROSENTHAL ACT) CAL. CIV. CODE §§ 1788-1788.32

- Plaintiff repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference, all other 62. paragraphs.
- The foregoing acts and omissions constitute numerous and multiple violations 63. of California's Rosenthal Act, including but not limited to each and every one of the above-cited provisions of California's Rosenthal Act, Cal. Civ. Code §§ 1788-1788.32
- As a result of each and every violation of the FDCPA, Plaintiff is entitled to 64. any actual damages pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(a); statutory damages for a knowing or willful violation in the amount up to \$1,000.00 pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(b); and reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(c) from Defendant.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against Defendant, and Plaintiff be awarded damages from Defendant, as follows:

- An award of actual damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(1);
- An award of statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(2)(A);
- An award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(a)(3);
- An award of actual damages pursuant to California Civil Code § 1788.30(a);
- An award of statutory damages of \$1,000.00 pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(b);

- An award of costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees, pursuant to Cal. Civ. Code § 1788.30(c);
- 65. Pursuant to the seventh amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, Plaintiff is entitled to, and demands, a trial by jury.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: June 9, 2010

Stephen G. Recordon Attorneys for Plaintiff Court Name: USDC California Southern

Division: 3

Receipt Number: CASO14483 Cashier ID: kdelabar

Transaction Date: 06/10/2010 Payer Name: RECORDON, RECORDON

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CIVIL FILING FEE For: GATES V ASSET

Case/Party: D-CAS-3-10-CV-001244-001

Amount: \$350.00

CHECK

Check/Money Order Num: 10165

Amt Tendered: \$350.00

Total Due: \$350.00 Total Tendered: \$350.00

Change Amt: \$0.00

There will be a fee of \$45.00 charged for any returned check.

SJS 44 (Rev. 12/07)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	ISTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)	DEFENDANTS		FILED	
Edward Gates, on beha	lf of himself and all others similarly situat	ed Asset Acceptant		,	
	of First Listed Plaintiff San Diego XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)	1 1	First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES) CONDEMNATION CASES, DINVOLVED.	FENSES BUT DE LOCATION OF HEBRINA	
Stephen G. Recordon, I	s, Address, and Telephone Number) Recordon & Recordon, 225 Broadway, S		1244BEN	WMC	
1900, San Diego, CA 92 II. BASIS OF JURISE		. CITIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff	
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	■ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)	(For Diversity Cases Only) PT Citizen of This State			
2 U.S. Government Defendant	1 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	of Business In		
		Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	3 🗇 3 Foreign Nation		
IV. NATURE OF SUI	T (Place an "X" in One Box Only)	I BETORVATURE/DENMENOR	BANKRUPTCY	THE STATUTES AND THE ST	
110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excl. Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise	PERSONAL INJURY 3 10 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 340 Marine 340 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 351 Truth in Lending 362 Personal Injury - Med. Malpractice Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 371 Truth in Lending 385 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 386 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability 377 Product Liability PROPERTY 378 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability Product Liability	610 Agriculture 620 Other Food & Drug 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 630 Liquor Laws 640 R.R. & Truck 650 Airline Regs. 660 Occupational Safety/Health 690 Other 710 Fair Labor Standards Act 720 Labor/Mgmt. Relations 730 Labor/Mgmt. Reporting & Disclosure Act 740 Railway Labor Act 790 Other Labor Litigation 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act 462 Naturalization Application 463 Habeas Corpus - Alien Detainee 465 Other Immigration Actions	□ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 □ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 □ 820 Copyrights □ 830 Patent □ 840 Trademark □ 861 HIA (1395ff) □ 862 Black Lung (923) □ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) □ 864 SSID Title XVI □ 865 RSI (405(g)) □ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) □ 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	400 State Reapportionment 410 Antitrust 430 Banks and Banking 450 Commerce 460 Deportation 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations 480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 810 Selective Service 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 875 Customer Challenge 12 USC 3410 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts	
☑ 1 Original ☐ 2 R	tate Court Appellate Court	Reopened anothe	Ferred from Grant		
VI. CAUSE OF ACTI	ION Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are f 15 USC 1692 Brief description of cause: Violation of Fair Debt Collection Pr		ni statutes unless diversity):		
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:		DEMAND \$	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND	y if demanded in complaint: e: I Yes □ No	
VIII. RELATED CAS IF ANY	SE(S) (See instructions): JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER		
DATE 06/09/2010	signature of atto Stephen G. Reco		1 & Flee	ndo	
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY RECEIPT # 19483	AMOUNT \$350 APPLYING IFP / 1/2	0 6/10/10 JUDGE_	MAG. JU	JDGE	